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JUL 19 1972

Dear Henry:

I am writing to you about Secretary Laird's recommendation, set forth in his letters to the Secretary of State and to me, that the United States put forward this summer at the Geneva Disarmament Committee a proposal aimed at prohibiting the production and transfer of lethal chemicals for weapons purposes.

I believe that an initiative along the lines proposed by Secretary Laird deserves urgent consideration. The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency is prepared to develop a draft CW proposal with other interested agencies. I assume that this work would be carried on under the aegis of the National Security Council machinery with a view to providing a possible initiative for the President's consideration in the near future. In order to move ahead rapidly we would hope it would be possible to concentrate our attention on the specific elements of a draft CW proposal.

~~In my view an early US initiative to promote the working out of a broadly acceptable international agreement focusing on the production and transfer of lethal chemicals would be a constructive step in the arms control field.~~

Such an initiative would provide evidence of our intention to carry forward through negotiations the commitment in the Moscow communique that the US and USSR "will continue their efforts to reach an international agreement regarding chemical weapons". As Co-Chairmen of the Geneva

Dr. Henry Kissinger,
Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
The White House.

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Conference, the US and USSR would play the leading role in negotiating a chemical weapons agreement. This activity would serve to demonstrate continuing US-Soviet cooperation on a significant arms control issue, where, we believe, mutual interests can be identified. This spring the Soviet Union put forward at Geneva a draft convention calling for the total elimination of chemical weapons, an approach with considerable international appeal. Recently, however, the Soviet representative has publicly stated that the USSR would be prepared to consider other more limited proposals and has privately urged the US Delegation to put forward a proposal that would make clear the basis on which the US would like to proceed.

On timing, I believe it would be highly advantageous to the United States to put forward a proposal regarding CW at Geneva this summer. Intensive discussions of approaches to CW prohibitions are underway but many countries have not yet taken firm positions. The United States therefore has an opportunity to help establish through an early concrete proposal the basis on which negotiations regarding chemical weapons will move forward. I think we should make every effort to take advantage of this opportunity and to press ahead with our work on an urgent basis.

Sincerely,

/s/ Gerard . Smith
Director

Gerard Smith

Enclosure:

Letter from Secretary Laird, July 12, 1972. T 5 5926

cc: ST - Mr. Keeny GC - Mr. Hancock
WEC - VAdm Lee
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Classified: Mr. Leonard
Mr. Keeny